

Indiana State Representative Dr. Vernon G. Smith

Dear Friends:

The 2004 short session of the Indiana General Assembly will reconvene January 8. We will discuss a number of important items, including our continuing efforts to provide Hoosier taxpayers with real property tax relief.



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and suggestions in the section provided.

Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns about state government.

Helping Hoosier Families

Property Tax Relief

The Indiana General Assembly has passed a series of reforms that help build on the tax restructuring that took place in 2002. The reforms contained in the package approved by the legislature will provide nearly \$500 million in property tax cuts for homes, businesses and farms.

The deadline to file for the homestead credit and other credits and deductions was extended, which will help 95,000 Hoosier homeowners receive state property tax relief. Counties will be able to offer installment payment plans to help taxpayers with larger bills, and penalties for late payments can be waived. Property taxpayers will have up to 45 days to appeal a bill.

While these provisions will help ease the burden on property taxpayers, I am disappointed we were unable to include additional protections that were approved by the House.

The House reforms would have given homeowners and farmers a larger share of property tax relief and provided additional relief for senior citizens. The House plan would have created a "farmstead" deduction to protect agricultural land owners while helping owners of older homes who have been harmed by the reassessment.

While these provisions were killed in the Indiana Senate, House Democrats will pursue these reforms when the legislature returns in January. The bills outlining our proposals have been filed and are ready for consideration.

The General Assembly's actions to date have demonstrated a bipartisan understanding that more must be done to help taxpayers, particularly those who own homes and farms. We must continue to protect their interests throughout the 2004 session.



Property Tax Relief Highlights

***Extension of filing deadline for homestead credit and other deductions**

***Counties could offer installment payment plans to taxpayers**

***Counties may waive penalties for late payments**

***Allow 45 days for taxpayers to appeal bills**

***Safeguards to limit local government property tax increases**

Please complete the survey and return it to me or go to www.in.gov/H14 to complete the survey online. A second person of your household may respond in the second set of answers.

2004 Legislative Survey

1. Do you believe owners of older homes should receive additional property tax deductions? ☐yes ☐no
☐yes ☐no
2. Should Indiana's property tax system be abolished, with corresponding increases in other taxes to ensure that critical local services be continued? ☐yes ☐no
☐yes ☐no
3. Should township government be eliminated and its functions be transferred to county government? ☐yes ☐no
☐yes ☐no
4. Should county financial offices, including the assessor, auditor, recorder and treasurer, be consolidated into one chief county financial officer? ☐yes ☐no
☐yes ☐no
5. Do you believe Indiana should enter into agreements with other states that would allow them to purchase prescription drugs in bulk, leading to reduced costs for consumers? ☐yes ☐no
☐yes ☐no
6. Do you believe the ISTEP tests for educational progress should be given in the spring rather than the fall of the school year? ☐yes ☐no
☐yes ☐no
7. In order to reduce jail overcrowding and corrections costs, should judges be given greater options to use community corrections and in-home detention programs rather than mandatory sentences? ☐yes ☐no
☐yes ☐no
8. Do you support the expansion of gaming in the state of Indiana? ☐yes ☐no
☐yes ☐no

Comments:
